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MEXICO, CANADA, CHINA TARIFFS FROM MARCH 4
US President Donald Trump said illicit drugs are still pouring in to the US from Mexico
25%
Tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods to kick in next week
10%
Extra duty on Chinese goods, over and above 10% tariff levied on February 4
We cannot allow this scourge to continue to harm the US... The proposed tariffs will, indeed, go into effect...
The tariffs on Mexico and Canada, announced earlier, was paused on February 3 for 1 month; it will now go live on March 4
Experts say the tariffs carry the risk of higher prices for American consumers and slower growth for the US economy | P12

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SC upholds power of arrest by GST, Customs officers

Says their authority to arrest is ancillary to their power to collect goods and services tax

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the constitutional validity of the arrest provisions under the Goods and Services Tax Act and the Customs Act. Rejecting a batch of pleas challenging these provisions, a bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Bela M Trivedi, and Justice M M Sundresh upheld the legislative amendments that classify specific economic offenses as cognizable and non-bailable.

This means enforcement authorities will have the power to arrest individuals without prior judicial approval in cases of serious violations such as tax evasion exceeding specified thresholds, fraudulent claims of exemptions, or misuse of trade instruments.

Special Acts like GST and Customs Act have specific objectives and judicial review should be exercised cautiously and in rare circumstances, the SC said. It added that frequent judicial interference in the functioning of the officers combating serious crimes may embolden the people who commit such crimes and may not do justice to the victims.

The bench, however, was mindful of the abuse of such powers. It said anticipatory bail could be allowed even in cases where FIR is not filed but the threat of arrest is imminent.

"By striking a delicate balance between enforcement powers and personal liberty, the judgment ensures that while the government can take stringent action against financial offenses, citizens' fundamental rights remain protected," said Abhishek A Rastogi, founder of law firm Rastogi Chambers.

"This reinforces the legal architecture of anti-evasion mechanisms and also brings the much-needed clarity to the enforcement of arrest provisions under these statutes," said Rajat Mohan, senior partner, AMRG & Associates.

Use it with caution, says court

SC maintained that the powers to arrest must be exercised with due caution and in compliance with the constitutional safeguards

IN THE SC

HC FIAT ON TOXIC UNION CARBIDE WASTE UPHELD

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Thursday refused to entertain a plea challenging the Madhya Pradesh High Court's order on transportation and safe disposal of all toxic waste from Bhopal's ill-fated Union Carbide plant at a treatment unit in the industrial town Pithampur in the state.

A two-judge bench comprising justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih also refused to stay Thursday's trial run of the disposal of 30 metric tonnes of the waste at Pithampur. Hours later, incineration of the toxic waste generated from the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy began.

Indore-based Gandhian Chinmay Mishra was among those who had challenged the HC order. But the bench observed, "You seem to be following the NIMBY principle, that is, not in my backyard. You are saying if they want to pollute, they may do it somewhere else, but not in my backyard. Not in Indore."

The court pointed out that the HC had considered the views of experts from institutes of repute and recognition like NEERI, NGRI and CPCB before arriving at its decision.

"The impugned HC order would reveal that it took a serious view of the lethargic manner in which the state government was dealing with the disposal of waste. It is revealed that only after the direction from the HC, the matter has moved. The HC is monitoring the matter. So, we do not find any reason to interfere with the impugned order," the bench said.

While granting some liberty, the judges asked the aggrieved parties to approach the high court. It said the petitioner and intervenors could also give their suggestions to the state government, which would place them before an expert committee for further consideration.

Won't sit on opinion of experts

The bench said it couldn't sit on the opinion of experts, who had already approved the transportation and disposal of the toxic Bhopal gas tragedy waste

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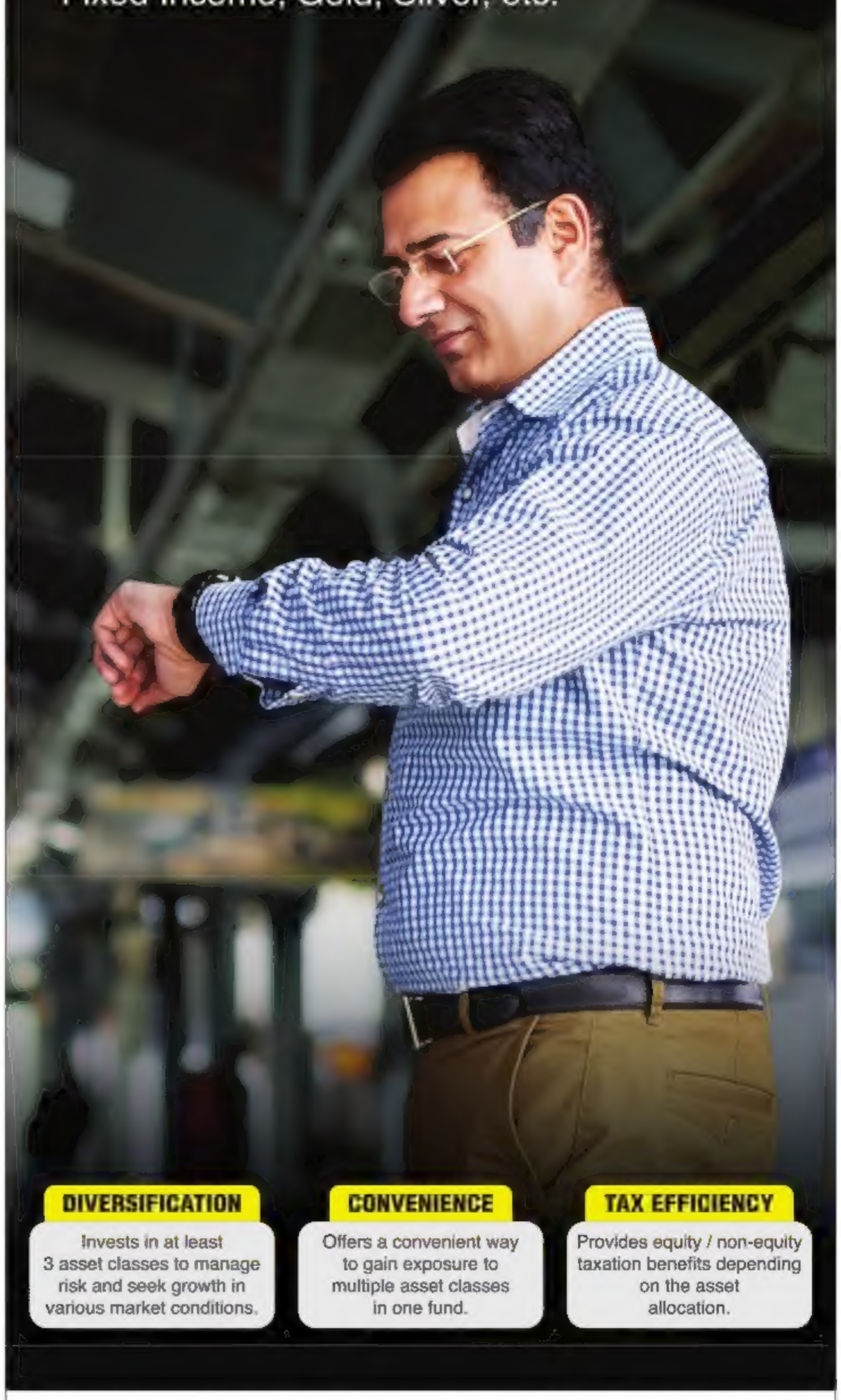

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EXPRESS READ

K'taka releases water to TG, farmers furious

Vijayapura: Karnataka has released 1 tmcft of water from the Almatti and Narayanpur reservoirs to Telangana, reportedly on the request of the neighbouring state. Farmer organisations, however, have condemned the decision | P4

Hampi Utsav: Passes for pourakarmikas

Hampi: The Vijayanagara District Commissioner on Thursday distributed over 2000 VIP passes to pourakarmikas and their families for the Hampi Utsav. The much-awaited event will be inaugurated on Friday | P4

TUHIN
NEW SEBI CHIEF
Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey is the new head of Securities and Exchange Board of India | P13

WITH THIS ISSUE
CHENNAI'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE 40 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Chief Minister Siddharamaiah and Speaker UT Khader take a look at books displayed at the 'Pustaka Mela' at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Thursday | EXPRESS

Delimitation BJP ploy to weaken us, all south states will resist: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

WARNING that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's enthusiasm for delimitation of Lok Sabha seats is just a ploy to punish southern states that resist the BJP's expansion, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah called upon the governments of Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh to unite against this injustice. He said discussions are going on with other southern states to launch a coordinated national-level resistance against the Centre's discriminatory policies.

The CM also slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent remarks on the issue, calling them "untrustworthy" and "misleading". The Union government is trying to create confusion in southern states while pushing an agenda that unfairly favours the northern states, he said.

Siddaramaiah questioned Shah's claims that southern states would not be affected by this exercise and demanded clarity on whether the new delimitation will be based on the proportion of the population or the current number of Lok Sabha seats. If the population-based formula is used, it will severely disadvantage southern states, which have successfully controlled their population while northern states have lagged behind in both population management and development, he said. P6

'K'taka BJP MPs silent spectators'

Siddaramaiah urged Kannadigas to unite beyond caste, religion and party lines to oppose the delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, warning that BJP MPs from Karnataka remain silent spectators while the state is continuously shortchanged.

K'taka bans plastic use for steaming idlis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE state health department has banned the use of plastic sheets in the preparation of idlis in eateries after the food safety and standards department found that nearly a quarter of the 251 idli samples tested were "unsafe" due to the use of plastic sheets during steaming.

The state health department is expected to issue an official notification regulating idli preparation in the next two days.

The food safety department tested 251 idli samples collected from eateries across the state till Wednesday and found that 54 of these were unsafe for consumption. The issue was traced to shops using plastic sheets while steaming idlis, which contaminates the food and introduces (cancer-causing) substances.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, who announced the ban on Thursday, told *TNIE* that 54 eateries have been fined for using plastic sheets. "Many vendors have been following this method of preparing idli and since the public is largely unaware of its health risks, the department started a statewide drive. As of Wednesday, 251 eateries were inspected and the number is expected to rise as the drive continues," Rao said.

Earlier, cloth was used for cooking idlis, but we received information that hotels have recently started using plastic. So, our officers conducted inquiries at various locations

Dinesh Gundu Rao, Health Minister